

REMARKS

I. Formal Matters

Claims 1-24 are all the claims pending in the present Application. By this Amendment, Applicants editorially amend claim 1. The amendments to claim 1 was made for reasons of precision of language and consistency. By this Amendment, Applicants also add new claims 20-24. Ample support for the newly added claims can be found throughout the specification.

Statement of Substance of Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courteous telephonic Interview on December 22, 2008. An Examiner's Interview Summary Record (PTO-413) was provided to the Applicants on December 31, 2008. The PTO-413 requires Applicants to file a Statement of Substance of the Interview. The Statement of Substance of the Interview is as follows:

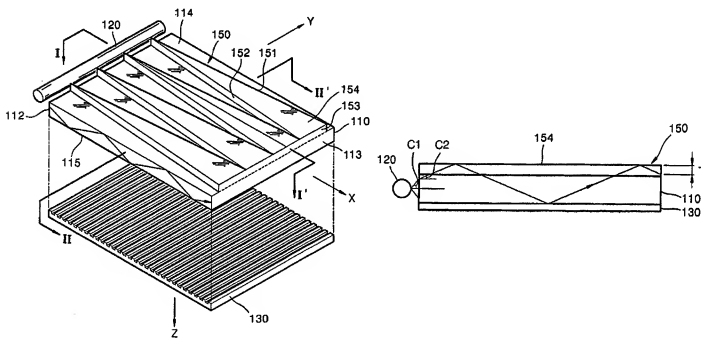
On December 11, 2008, the Board issued a decision on Appeal. After the decision, the Examiner canceled the rejected claims and issued a Notice of Allowance. Applicants' representative contacted the Examiner and indicated that the Notice of Allowance was premature, as Applicants had a 2 month period to appeal the decision of the Board, or to otherwise continue prosecution of the present Application. As a result of the Interview, the Examiner withdrew the Notice of Allowance.

II. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Board of Appeals has maintained the rejection of claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kraft (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0147259) in view of Umemoto (U.S. Patent No. 6,616,289). Applicants respectfully disagree that this proposed combination teaches each

feature of claim 1. Nevertheless, to clarify the distinctions between claim 1 and the cited art of record, Applicants have amended claim 1.

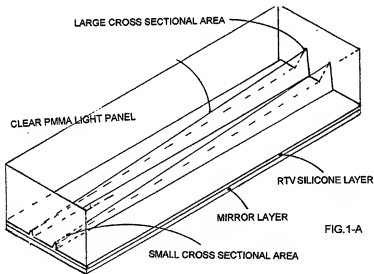
With respect to independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully assert that the art of record fails to teach, or even suggest, at least “the optical deflector is disposed on top of at least one of the light emitting surface.” For the Examiner’s convenience, Applicants reproduce FIGS. 3 and 7 of the present Application.



In the exemplary embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 7 above, the claimed “optical deflector” corresponds to element 150, whereas the claimed “light emitting surface” corresponds to element 114 or element 115. Specifically, the present Application teaches that “[a] light emitting surface from which light is emitted becomes either or both of the top surface 114 and

the bottom surface 115.” (page 7, ¶ [0041]). As shown in the exemplary embodiment of FIGS. 3 and 7, the optical deflector (150) is disposed on top of the light emitting surface (114).

Conversely, the Kraft Application is related to the controlled light extraction from light guides cast, imbedded or machined into base plastic or glass panels that are fed light from a remote source. (Page 2, ¶ [0011]). Kraft also describes the light panel as follows: “[t]he light panel has imbedded irregular tetrahedron shaped light guides that emit light in a uniform controlled fashion over the length of the emitting surface.” (Abstract). These features are illustrated in FIG. 1-A of Kraft, which is reproduced below.



The examiner alleges that the “tetrahedron shaped light guides” of Kraft correspond to the claimed “optical detector.” The Examiner also alleges that the “clear PMMA light panel” of Kraft includes a light emitting surface. Similarly, Kraft teaches that “[l]ight is emitted from a clear panel from the surface of the light guides within the panel.” (Page 3, ¶ [0034]). In other words, the light guides (alleged optical detector) are located within the panel.

Conversely, claim 1 requires that “the optical deflector is disposed on top of at least one of the light emitting surface.” For at least this reason Kraft fails to teach the above-recited feature of claim 1. With respect to Umemoto, the Examiner only relies on this reference for its alleged teaching of the “rod-shaped light source.” As such, Umemoto fails to cure the deficient disclosure of Kraft.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 1 is allowable over the cited art of record. With respect to claims 1-9 and 20-24, these claims depend from independent claim 1. Accordingly, these claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 1. They are also allowable because of the additional features recited therein.

With respect to independent claims 10 and 15, Applicants respectfully assert that these claims are allowable for reasons analogous to those recited with respect to claim 1. Specifically, the cited art of record fails to teach, or even suggest, at least “an optical deflector protruding from at least one of the light emitting surface and a surface opposite to the light emitting surface,” as required by claims 10 and 15.

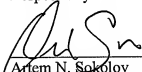
With respect to claims 11-14 and 16-19, these claims depend from claims 10 and 15 respectively. As such, claims 11-14 and 16-19 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from claims 10 and 15. They are also allowable because of the additional features recited therein.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

This Amendment is being filed via the USPTO Electronic Filing System (EFS). Applicants herewith petition the Director of the USPTO to extend the time for reply to the above-identified Office Action for an appropriate length of time if necessary. Any fee due under 37 U.S.C. § 1.17(a) is being paid via the USPTO Electronic Filing System (EFS). The USPTO is also directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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